

# Chapatti diagram



To explore relationships between things – particularly the relative importance, influence or power of people, organisations or groups.

## Steps in the process

- Prepare different cards of different size circles. Place a card with the person, group or organisation that is the focus of discussion on the ground.
- Make a list of all the people, groups or organisations that exist and have an influence on the person, group, organisation or community you are discussing.
- Decide if the people, groups or organisations in the list have a little, medium or strong influence/power over the person, group, organisation or community under discussion.
- Choose an appropriate sized circle (small = little influence, medium = medium influence and big = strong influence) and write the people, groups or organisations onto the relevant size circle.
- Participants then discuss their perception of the relative importance or influence of the people, groups or organisations on themselves, their community, family or organisation. The circles are then placed at different distances from each other to show the nature of relations between them.
- The group discusses the diagram that has been constructed, the relationships, the effects on the community etc.
- Once the diagram is finished each circle is classified as 'ally', 'neutral' or 'threat' (using visual symbols placed or drawn on the circles).
- Strategies and actions are discussed and designed to transform and improve the situation.

- The visualisation can be extended by developing 'ideal' versions and exploring how to get there.

## Suggestions for use

- The chapatti diagram can be used to explore the **relative influence of community organisations** (village council, SMC, women's group, youth group, etc.) in relation to a particular issue such as education. Issues to explore might include, whether the organisations are strong and well organised, to what degree they are accessible and supportive of the most marginalised within the community, and what relations they have with other organisations in the community. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 195-197.
- The chapatti diagram can be used to explore **informal power relations** in a community, looking at the types of power held by different individuals and their relations to each other. Issues to explore might include, how people gain or lose power, how power can be used in positive or negative ways, and how shifts of power might be achieved. See Reflect Mother Manual, p. 201-203.
- The chapatti diagram can be used to analyse **power relations within the family**. One powerful exercise that has been used involves participants creating a chapatti diagram of their family when they were children. Once this has been completed and the power relationships discussed they go on to create a chapatti diagram of their current family situation – looking at their own power as an adult.
- A chapatti diagram can be constructed as part of a **workshop evaluation** process to show the interpersonal power relations among participants and facilitators. These can be constructed individually and then shared/ analysed or a single diagram may seek to capture the consensus of the whole group (though conflict should not be avoided in the process).
- Chapatti diagrams can also be used to analyse **institutional power relations** or the practice of power at national or international levels. The process of constructing these diagrams is often a useful way for participants with different perspectives to exchange views and achieve some form of understanding.
- A chapatti diagram can be used to explore **sources of knowledge** or information on a particular topic such as childbirth or agriculture. Issues to

explore might include, who are what are the participants' main sources of information on a particular topic, how reliable are those sources of information, are the participants able to distinguish between myths or opinions and facts, are traditional or modern sources considered more important, etc. See for example, Chapatti Diagram on Childbirth, Reflect Mother Manual, p. 184-185.

- The chapatti diagram can be used to **research an advocacy strategy**. If participants in a research process are active in identifying actors who are acting as barriers to achieving the realisation of human rights at local, national and - as possible - global levels, then 1. We can triangulate analysis done at other levels 2. Varied participants are actively part of the research process and may take action for change.

## References

- Communication & Power, ActionAid, 2003, p. 1007.
- [Reflect Mother Manual](#), ActionAid International, 1996, p. 195.